

Valtena G. Brown, Chief Operating Officer  
School Operations

**SUBJECT: REQUEST SCHOOL BOARD APPROVAL AND DENIAL OF CHARTER  
SCHOOL APPLICATIONS**

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC  
FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**APPLICATIONS**

Section 1002.33, F.S., authorizes the establishment of charter schools in Florida. As provided in Section 1002.33(6), F.S., and School Board Policy 9800, *Charter Schools*, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) receives and reviews charter school applications from individuals and/or organizations in the community. On August 1, 2013, the School Board received 43 applications to operate a charter school in Miami-Dade County. Pursuant to Section 1002.33(6)(b)(3), F.S., a sponsor must approve or deny an application no later than 60 calendar days after the application is received unless the applicants have agreed in writing to extend the statutory timeline.

**EVALUATION**

Pursuant to School Board Policy 9800, *Charter Schools*, (School Board Policy) the District reviews all applications using an evaluation instrument developed by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) and may include additional information or documents requested by the District. The Standard Model Application includes standards of evaluation, certification and assurance declarations. The Sponsor shall deny any application that does not comply with the statutory requirements and/or Sponsor's instructions for charter school applications.

The Superintendent has appointed two committees with the responsibility to review and evaluate charter school applications: Technical Review Committee (TRC) and Application Review Committee (ARC). These committees are comprised of representatives from various District departments and are charged with identifying deficiencies in the written application and/or areas that require clarification to fully evaluate the quality of the application or the capacity of the applicant to properly implement the proposed plan.

Pursuant to Section 1002.33(6)(3)(a), F.S., if an application is denied, the District shall, within ten (10) calendar days after the denial, articulate in writing the specific reasons for the denial, based upon good cause, and provide the letter of denial and supporting documentation to the applicant and the FLDOE. An applicant may appeal the Board's denial by submitting a request in writing to the State Board of Education and the Sponsor no later than thirty (30) calendar days after receiving a notice of denial. However, if an application to replicate a high-performing charter school application is denied, the applicant may appeal the denial directly to the State Board of Education, bypassing the normal appeal process.

Pursuant to School Board Policy, nine (9) charter school applications are being presented for final consideration by the School Board. Detailed in the chart below is a summary of each charter school application and the corresponding committee recommendation. The specific reasons for each recommendation can be found in the identified Attachments and the evaluation forms which are included and incorporated by reference in this Board item.

Table 1: Charter Applications				
Type of Application	Proposed Name of School	Legal Entity	Committee Recommendation	Supporting Documentation
<b>Approvals</b>				
1.	Traditional	Avant Garde Academy	Approval	Attachment A
2.	Traditional	Downtown Doral Charter Elementary School		
3.	High Performing Replication*	Mater Academy West		
4.	High Performing Replication*	Mater Academy Middle West		
5.	Traditional	Sports Leadership And Management High School – North Campus		
6.	Traditional	Sports Leadership And Management High School – North Campus		
<b>Denials</b>				
1.	Traditional	AcadeMir Charter School East (K-5)	Denial	Attachment B & C
2.	Traditional	AcadeMir Charter School of Kendall		
3.	Traditional	AcadeMir Charter School South		

\*Pursuant to s.1002.33, "high performing" is a designation made by the Commission of Education for certain charter schools that allows that school to replicate an existing program.

### **DUE PROCESS**

To ensure proper notice and due process, each applicant was noticed of the Superintendent's intent to recommend approval to the School Board and provided a copy of the final evaluation prior to this School Board Meeting. The applicants were also informed of the School Board's Instructional Excellence and Community Engagement Committee Meeting and procedures for requesting to appear before the School Board at meetings and public hearings. Additionally, prior to submission, a courtesy orientation for charter school applicants was noticed on the Charter School Support department's website and facilitated by multiple district departments on May 3, 2013. Individual appointments regarding application preparation were also held throughout the year by Charter School Support staff, upon request.

### **POTENTIAL NET FINANCIAL IMPACT TO THE DISTRICT**

Currently a total of fourteen (14) charter school applications are scheduled to open in the 2014-15 SY (Schools in the Pipeline); seven charter school applications from previous cohorts and an additional seven applications from the most recent application cycle, the 2013 Cohort. Moreover, recommended for approval in this Board Item is an additional six applications. Pursuant to School Board Policy, "an application shall be automatically rescinded, without further action by the Sponsor, if the applicant does not enter into contract negotiations or open the school within: (1) the timeframe specified by law, or (2) the date of extension which has been mutually agreed upon in writing by both parties." Not until a

charter contract is approved and executed, does a charter school have the authority to open and operate. In the event that all the proposed schools open next school year as anticipated, the estimated net impact to the District is summarized below.

	<b>Total FEFP (\$ Revenue)</b>	<b>Initial Year Loss (No. of Positions)</b>
Schools in the Pipeline (14)	\$27,549,510	465
2013 Application Cohort (6) (Attachment A)	\$13,349,244	223
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$40,898,754</b>	<b>688</b>

*(The loss of revenue is based on 95% of FEFP funds per student and 75% of the initial year enrollment)*

Copies of the applications and evaluations have been transmitted to the School Board Members under separate cover and will be available for inspection by the public in the Office of Board Recording Secretary, Room 924, and in the Citizen Information Center, Room 158, 1450 N.E. Second Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132.

**RECOMMENDED:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

1. Approve six charter school applications and authorize the Superintendent to negotiate a contract reflecting the contents of the applications as approved by the School Board for:
  - a. Avant Garde Academy of Florida, Inc., on behalf of Avant Garde Academy;
  - b. Downtown Doral Charter Elementary School, Inc., on behalf of Downtown Doral Charter Elementary School;
  - c. Mater Academy, Inc., on behalf of Mater Academy West;
  - d. Mater Academy, Inc., on behalf of Mater Academy Middle West;
  - e. Sports Leadership and Management Foundation, Inc., on behalf of Sports Leadership And Management High School – North Campus; and
  - f. Sports Leadership and Management Foundation, Inc., on behalf of Sports Leadership And Management Middle School – North Campus.
  
2. Deny three charter school applications for:
  - a. AcadeMir Charter Schools, Inc., on behalf of AcadeMir Charter School East (K-5);
  - b. AcadeMir Charter Schools, Inc., on behalf of AcadeMir Charter School of Kendall; and

c. AcadeMir Charter Schools, Inc., on behalf of AcadeMir Charter School South.

3. Approve a Reduction-in-Force/Layoff as needed, only to the extent described in this item as Total Initial Loss (Table 2), in accordance with School Board policies and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

VGB:elg  
Attachments

**School Board Agenda Item C-30  
ATTACHMENT A**

**APPLICATIONS:**

- Avant Garde Academy
- Downtown Doral Charter Elementary School
- Mater Academy West
- Mater Academy Middle West
- Sports Leadership And Management High School – North Campus
- Sports Leadership And Management Middle School – North Campus

The M-DCPS' Charter School Application Review Committee (ARC) reviewed the six charter school applications listed below and recommended approval to the Superintendent.

(1)/(2)/(3)	(5)(6)	(7)	(8)		(10)	(12)	(13)	
Name of School	Legal Entity	Term	Grade Levels	Enrollment	Founding/ Governing Board Members	Focus/ Theme	DISTRICT IMPACT 2014-15 SY	
		Initial/ Exp.	Current or Initial Year				Revenue (\$)/ Positions	
APPLICATIONS								
<b>Avant Garde Academy</b> ESP: N/A  <i>ARC recommended approval on October 10, 2013.</i>	Avant Garde Academy of Florida, Inc.	5 years	6-9	452	The members of the Founding Board are: Tamara Latoya Moodie, Principal, South Florida Autism Charter School; Richard E. English, Manager Member, Advocate Accounting CPA Firm, LLC; and Thomas M. David, Attorney, Fuerst, Ittleman, David & Joseph, FL.	None	\$2,084,426	
		2014/2019	6-12	1,394			21	14
<b>Downtown Doral Charter Elementary School</b> ESP: N/A  <i>ARC recommended approval on October 4, 2013.</i>	Downtown Doral Charter Elementary School, Inc.	5 years	K-3	360	The members of the Founding Board are: Roberto J. Pesant, Director, Codina Partners; Joseph B. Dobronyi, Jr., Executive Director, JP Morgan; and Ana-Marie Codina Barlick, Director, Codina Partners.	Bilingual	\$1,643,930	
		2014/2019	K-5	768			18	11

(1)/(2)(3)	(5)(6)	(7)	(8)		(10)	(12)	(13)	
Name of School	Legal Entity	Term	Grade Levels	Enrollment	Founding/ Governing Board Members	Focus/ Theme	DISTRICT IMPACT 2014-15 SY	
		Initial/ Exp.	Current or Initial Year	Maximum Capacity			Revenue (\$)/ Positions	Instr.
<b>Mater Academy West</b> ESP: Academica Dade LLC  <i>ARC recommended approval on October 31, 2013.</i>	Mater Academy, Inc.	5 years	K-5	450	The members of the Governing Board are: Roberto C. Blanch, Attorney, Siegfried, Rivera, Lerner, et. al., P.A.; Shannine Sadesky, Principal, Somerset Acad., Broward County Public Schools; Juan A. Garcia, Customer Serv. Manager, Hotwire Comm.; and Cesar C. Crousillat, Asset Manager, Rialto Capital Management.	None	\$2,078,042	
		2014/2019	K-5	750			22	14
<b>Mater Academy Middle West</b> ESP: Academica Dade LLC  <i>ARC recommended approval on October 31, 2013.</i>	Mater Academy, Inc.	5 years	6-8	750	The members of the Governing Board are: Rene Ruiz, Attorney/ Shareholder, Stearns Weaver Miller; Roberto Abello, ER Physician, ER Stat; Alina Lopez, Assistant Principal, Doral Academy Charter Middle School; Shannine Sadesky, Principal, Somerset Academy (Broward County Public Schools); C. Christian Crousillat, Asset Manager, Rialto Capital Management; and Robert C. Blanch, Attorney/ Shareholder, Siegfried, Rivera, Lerner, et. al., P.A.	None	\$3,514,442	
		2014/2019	6-8	750			35	23
<b>Sports Leadership And Management High School – North Campus</b> ESP: Academica Dade LLC  <i>ARC recommended approval on October 31, 2013.</i>	Sports Leadership and Management Foundation, Inc.	5 years	9-10	500	The members of the Governing Board are: Rene Ruiz, Attorney/ Shareholder, Stearns Weaver Miller; Roberto Abello, ER Physician, ER Stat; Alina Lopez, Assistant Principal, Doral Academy Charter Middle School; Shannine Sadesky, Principal, Somerset Academy (Broward County Public Schools); C. Christian Crousillat, Asset Manager, Rialto Capital Management; and Robert C. Blanch, Attorney/ Shareholder, Siegfried, Rivera, Lerner, et. al., P.A.	Sports	\$2,314,250	
		2014/2019	9-12	1,000			22	15
<b>Sports Leadership And Management Middle School – North Campus</b> ESP: Academica Dade LLC  <i>ARC recommended approval on October 31, 2013.</i>	Sports Leadership and Management Foundation, Inc.	5 years	6-8	374	The members of the Governing Board are: Rene Ruiz, Attorney/ Shareholder, Stearns Weaver Miller; Roberto Abello, ER Physician, ER Stat; Alina Lopez, Assistant Principal, Doral Academy Charter Middle School; Shannine Sadesky, Principal, Somerset Academy (Broward County Public Schools); C. Christian Crousillat, Asset Manager, Rialto Capital Management; and Robert C. Blanch, Attorney/ Shareholder, Siegfried, Rivera, Lerner, et. al., P.A.	Sports	\$1,714,154	
		2014/2019	6-8	750			16	12

(1)(2)(3)	(5)(6)	(7)	(8)		(10)	(12)	(13)
Name of School	Legal Entity	Term	Grade Levels	Enrollment	Founding/ Governing Board Members	Focus/ Theme	DISTRICT IMPACT 2014-15 SY
		Current or Initial Year		Maximum Capacity			Revenue (\$) Positions
		Initial/ Exp.					Instr.
<b>TOTAL REVENUE (\$):</b>							<b>\$13,349,244</b>
Total Instructional Positions:							<b>134</b>
Total Non-Instructional Positions:							<b>89</b>
<b>TOTAL POSITIONS:</b>							<b>223</b>

Initial Year Loss: The revenue and positions indicated as "Initial Year Loss" provide an estimate of the potential impact on the District's General Fund (\$13,349,244), instructional staffing (134 positions), and non-instructional staffing (89 positions). The loss of revenue is based on 95% of FEFP funds per student and 75% of the initial year enrollment projection that the District will not realize for the current fiscal year.

Copies of the applications and evaluations will be transmitted to the School Board Members under separate cover and will be available for inspection by the public in the Office of Board Recording Secretary, Room 924, and in the Citizen Information Center, Room 158, 1450 N.E. Second Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132.

## School Board Agenda Item C-30 ATTACHMENT B

As provided in Board Policy 9800, *Charter Schools*, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has received charter school applications from individuals and/or organizations in the community.

### **Proposal**

AcadeMir Charter School, Inc. proposes to establish two K-8 Centers: AcadeMir Charter School of Kendall with 640 students and AcadeMir Charter School South with 640 students. The applications for these two charter schools propose to open in the 2014-2015 school year. The applicant simultaneously also submitted an application for a K-5 charter school, AcadeMir Charter School East. Currently, AcadeMir Charter School, Inc. operates AcadeMir Charter School West that opened in 2010 and AcadeMir Charter School Middle that opened in 2012.

### **Applicant**

The members of the Governing Board are: Dr. Tirso Alonso, Medical Director, Lundbeck; Alexander D. Casas, Police Chief, Florida International University; Joanna Noriega, Associate Attorney, Brown Sims P.C.

The applicant did not attend the District's charter school application orientation conducted on May 3, 2013. The meeting is not mandatory but attendance is strongly recommended by the Florida Department of Education and the District's Charter School Support Office to inform applicants of new statutory requirements and District policies and procedures.

### **Evaluation**

A review of these charter school applications was conducted pursuant to § 1002.33 (6), F. S., and Board Policy 9800, using the required Standard Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument (IEPC-M2). The Standard Model Application includes 19 evaluation and certification standards and assurances declarations. As allowed by § 1002.33(6)(a)(6), F.S. and pursuant to Board Policy 9800, the District also includes evaluation of the applicant's experience and historical performance operating charter schools.

The initial review conducted by members of the Technical Review Committee (TRC) members resulted in significant concerns and findings that were provided to the applicant and forwarded to the Applicant Review Committee (ARC). The ARC is responsible for a second review of the applications as well as conducting an interview to assess the overall capacity of the applicant's ability to establish and implement the charter school plan, clarify any components of the written application for which reviewers have questions or require additional information, and corroborate information provided in the written application. The ARC reviewed the two applications on September 20, 2013.

The ARC found that the applications failed to meet the minimum statutory requirements and identified substantial concerns/deficiencies regarding the applicant's understanding of various conceptual issues and/or its ability to meet the statutory requirements. Most glaringly, the applications for the three schools were almost identical, even though these two applications include middle school grades and the K-5 does not, and none of them included the required detailed curriculum. Additionally, the historical performance of AcadeMir West does not outweigh the significant deficiencies of these applications.

Specifically, the applications did not meet the required standards in 14 of the 19 applicable categories in the Model Evaluation Instrument. As summarized below, these deficiencies constitute good cause for denial of the applications.

1. Failure to clearly describe the anticipated population.
  - The applications state that the projected student population was developed using the demographics of the proposed targeted area and also that the demographics of the School "will



mirror the demographics of Miami-Dade County,” yet no desired location was identified as the targeted area nor did the applicant provide the results of any market research to verify its projections. (Standards 2, 14, 17)

- While the applications state that the school will be offering “smaller” class sizes, the projected enrollment and number of classes are based on meeting class size in accordance with state statute, the same class size as is required of every other public school. (Standard 2)
  - The applications state that they will target “students interested in exploring mathematics and science as a field of educational study and potential career pathway” but the applicant offers no method for attracting such students within the targeted area, nor does it provide an educational program that actually emphasizes math and science. (Standard 2, 3, 4)
  - The projected ELL population for each school is 40 students or approximately 10% of the population for year 1 which is significantly lower than the average ELL population in Miami-Dade which is 20%. Since a desired location was not identified, there is no support for this projection. (Standard 2)
2. Failure to provide a detailed educational and curriculum plan that illustrates how students will be provided services to attain state standards and that is aligned to the mission and vision established in Section 1. (Standards 3, 4)
- The applicant provided the Sponsor with three applications which were identical, two K-8 schools and one K-5. The education and curriculum plan is insufficient and incomplete because it lacks a detailed curriculum. For these K-8s, there is no curriculum for middle school students, including the courses for these students to ensure that they will be provided with the required coursework to articulate to high school. There are no advanced classes provided or electives (other than art, music, and Spanish. (Standards 3, 4)
  - The daily schedule is not aligned with the school’s educational plan. Additionally, the applicant indicates that the Sponsor’s Student Progression Plan (SPP) will be implemented, yet the schedule provided does not provide the instructional minutes required by the SPP.
  - The applications state that a foreign language program will be implemented, yet the schedule did not reflect instructional minutes to accommodate this subject. Additionally the curriculum section did not provide details as to what the foreign language program would entail. (Standard 3)
  - An extended day and year will be provided but the application fails to show how this will impact the instructional day. (Standards 3, 4)
  - The sample bell schedule provided addresses the elementary portion of the program only. There is no indication of what the instructional day for the middle school will be. (Standard 3)
  - The applications repeatedly state that the Educational Program will emphasize science and mathematics but there is no curriculum plan provided to support that emphasis and there is no mention of any innovative or rigorous science or math courses. (Standards 3, 4)
  - Although the applications state that a rigorous curriculum will be provided, there is no evidence of academic “rigor.” (Standard 4)
  - The applications indicate that thematic units have been designed that integrate various subjects but there is no description or details provided nor does the applicant show how these “units” will impact the instructional program or how they are aligned with the mission and vision of the schools. (Standards 3, 4)
  - The applications do not address new statutory requirements for middle school students to take an internet based course. (Standard 4)
  - The applications do not clearly indicate what advanced level coursework will be offered to eligible students. (Standards 3, 4)
  - Despite the applications statements that the school will focus on mathematics and science, most of the mathematics references are outdated and not aligned with the Common Core standards. In fact, it appears that the applicant is not fully aware of the state’s new expectations for mathematics. (Standard 4)
  - The Language Arts/Reading instructional framework is not consistent with state approved materials to teach reading at all levels. (Standard 4)

- The applications cite writing standards that are not current. (Standard 4)
3. Failure to provide measureable goals and objectives that set high standards for student performance. (Standard 5)
    - The applications lack evidence that a range of valid and reliable assessments will be used to measure student performance. (Standard 5)
    - The applications state that “innovative” assessment tools and strategies will be used, but lists only state required assessments. (Standard 5)
    - Educational goals and objectives are not specific, use the wrong metrics, do not address all of the grades the schools intend to serve, and do not provide high performance standards. Although the applications state that mathematics and science will be emphasized, the goals and objectives do not reflect that emphasis. (Standard 5)
    - The applications lack any details on promotion requirements for middle school credits that will ensure students progressing to high school will graduate on time or with the required credits. (Standards 4,5)
  4. Failure to demonstrate an understanding of state and federal requirements regarding the education of Exceptional Students (ESE) and English Language Learners (ELL). (Standards 6,7)
    - The applications do not appropriately describe the level of ESE services the schools will provide. Although the applications state that they will serve students who require resource instruction (40-80% general education and resource), they do not describe how that will be provided. (Standard 6)
    - The staffing plan to serve Exceptional Students does not align with the level of services indicated. (Standard 6)
    - The applications provide no basis for the ELL projection and in fact it is far lower than the percentage in all other Miami-Dade County Public schools. (Standard 7)
    - The applications do not provide identification procedures for ELL students who enter the school for the first time. (Standard 7)
    - The applications do not provide an adequate plan for post program review and monitoring requirements for students who have exited the ELL program. (Standard 7)
    - The applications do not provide appropriate coursework that will be offered to middle school students, specifically those ELL students who are identified as needing Developmental Language Arts through ESOL. The interventions identified for ELL, ESE and student below grade level are identical and not specifically designed for each group of students. (Standard 7)
  5. Failure to provide a realistic assessment of the projected sources of revenue and expenses that ensure the financial viability of the school. (Standard 17)
    - The applicant did not clearly indicate the cost of the facility. Even though no facility has been identified, the narrative indicated that the cost of the facility would be based on \$900 per student, but at 50% enrollment the cost varies from \$870 in year one to \$633 per student in year 5.
    - Although the application states that the budget is conservative and does not include loans or grants, the applicant nevertheless included a loan of \$25,000 in the startup budget and a loan of \$50,000 in year one (at 50% enrollment) but did not provide any documentation of the source, evidence of the school's ability to secure a loan, or the terms of the loan.
    - Expenditures for utilities are underestimated based on county standards and even the corporation's existing school's current expenditures.
    - The information provided in the budget does not align with the staffing plans provided within the applications.
    - The funds allocated for the technology needs of the schools are insufficient.
  6. Failure to describe sound practices for student discipline and establish policies that will ensure that there is an admissions and enrollment process that is open, fair and in accordance with applicable law. (Standards 8, 13)
    - The Student and Parent Contracts do not support a positive school climate and the implementation of the schools' mission and vision. Several requirements would disfranchise

- students and could result in students being involuntarily withdrawn from the school which is inconsistent with the Code of Student Conduct. (Standard 13)
  - The applicant states that the schools will adopt the Sponsor's Code of Student Conduct but provides a Student Contract that it is not aligned and in some instances is contradictory. For example, the contract states that students may be suspended for not following school policies such as not wearing a uniform, not delivering messages to the school, not showing good sportsmanship and not taking care of books and materials. (Standards 8, 13)
  - A clear description of the enrollment process was not provided, specifically, the method that will be used to ensure that all students who apply will be provided an equal opportunity to attend and a description of the lottery process. (Standard 13)
  - Enrollment timelines provided in sections 13 and 19 are not the same.(Standards 13, 19)
  - The applications do not provide what efforts the school would make to encourage student and community involvement. (Standard 13)
7. Failure to provide evidence of an organizational plan which provides a clear understanding of how the school will be governed and managed. (Standards 9, 10, 11, 12)
- The applications contain an organizational chart that includes an ESP, but the required narrative does not provide an explanation of the relationship between the two entities. Also, the applications are inconsistent as to the extent of the ESP's involvement in the School's financial operations. (Standards 9, 11)
  - The applications state that the schools will have a Financial Manager, which was not budgeted or included in the staffing plan. Additionally, the duties of this position are included in services offered by the ESP. (Standards 9, 11, 12)
  - The office that each governing board member holds was not included. (Standards 9, 11)
  - There is no mention of the Parent Representative, as required by law. (Standard 9)
  - There is no indication that the school will maintain a school webpage, as required by law. (Standard 9)
  - The organizational chart provided in the applications and the one in the staff handbook are different. The one found in the staff handbook shows all employees, including the principal, reporting to the ESP. But in the governance section and management section, the school's Principal will report directly to the governing board and the teachers will report to the principal who will be supported and assisted by the ESP. (Standards 9, 10)
  - The staffing plan described in the management section is not aligned with the staffing plan included with the budget. (Standards 10, 12, 17)
  - The applications failed to provide job descriptions or requirements for key staff or a sound plan for recruiting and retaining qualified and capable staff. (Standard 10)
  - The applications did not outline the criteria or the process the board will use to select its school leader nor does it describe how the school leader would be evaluated. (Standard 10)
  - The employee benefits and compensation plan were not delineated. (Standards 12, 17)
  - The applicant did not interview or solicit any other ESP and did not provide a persuasive explanation of the reasons for contracting with the proposed ESP. (Standard 11)
  - It is not clear how the board's relationship with the ESP will further the school's mission. (Standard 11)
  - Although a sample management agreement was provided, a clear description of the services the ESP will deliver was not provided. (Standard 11)
  - No summary of the ESP's history and experience was provided nor was the background and/or experience of the ESP principals or senior management. (Standard 11)
  - The ESP experience is not complete since no list of other schools with which the ESP has contracts was provided. Also lacking is student and financial data on these schools. (Standard 11)
8. Failure to provide a realistic plan for securing an adequate facility. (Standard 14)
- The applications did not describe any location or facility. (Standard 2,14)

- The facility plan discusses needed renovations but the budget did not reflect renovations nor a plan proffered to facilitate the need. (Standards 14, 17)
- The applicant does not provide an adequate back up plan if enrollment projections are not met because many of the options provided for back up facilities are not realistic and/or appropriate. (Standard 14)
- The applicant fails to provide an alternate or temporary facility plan.

The applicant was noticed of the Superintendent's intent to recommend denial to the School Board and provided a copy of the final evaluation. Pursuant to Section 1002.33(6) (c), F.S., if the School Board approves this recommendation to deny the application, the applicant may appeal to the State Board of Education no later than 30 days after receipt of the School Board's decision.

Copies of the applications and evaluation, which are incorporated by reference in this Board item, will be transmitted to the School Board Members under separate cover and will be available for inspection by the public in the Office of Board Recording Secretary, Room 924, and in the Citizen Information Center, Room 158, 1450 N.E. Second Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132.

## School Board Agenda Item C-30 ATTACHMENT C

As provided in Board Policy 9800, *Charter Schools*, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has received charter school applications from individuals and/or organizations in the community.

### **Proposal**

AcadeMir Charter School, Inc. proposes to establish AcadeMir Charter School East with 548 students to open for the 2014-2015 school year. The applicant simultaneously also submitted an application for two K-8 charter schools, AcadeMir Charter School of Kendall and AcadeMir School South. Currently, AcadeMir Charter School, Inc. operates AcadeMir Charter School West that opened in 2010 and AcadeMir Charter School Middle that opened in 2012.

### **Applicant**

The members of the Governing Board are: Dr. Tirso Alonso, Medical Director, Lundbeck; Alexander D. Casas, Police Chief, Florida International University; Joanna Noriega, Associate Attorney, Brown Sims P.C.

The applicant did not attend the District's charter school application orientation conducted on May 3, 2013. The meeting is not mandatory but attendance is strongly recommended by the Florida Department of Education and the District's Charter School Support Office to inform applicants of new statutory requirements and District policies and procedures.

### **Evaluation**

A review of the charter school application was conducted pursuant to § 1002.33 (6), F. S., and Board Policy 9800, using the required Standard Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument (IEPC-M2). The Standard Model Application includes 19 evaluation and certification standards and assurances declarations. As allowed by § 1002.33(6)(a)(6), F.S. and pursuant to Board Policy 9800, the District also includes evaluation of the applicant's experience and historical performance operating charter schools.

The initial review conducted by members of the Technical Review Committee (TRC) members resulted in significant concerns and findings that were provided to the applicant and forwarded to the Applicant Review Committee (ARC). The ARC is responsible for a second review of the application as well as conducting an interview to assess the overall capacity of the applicant's ability to establish and implement the charter school plan, clarify any components of the written application for which reviewers have questions or require additional information, and corroborate information provided in the written application. The ARC reviewed the application on September 20, 2013.

The ARC found that the application failed to meet the minimum statutory requirements and identified substantial concerns/deficiencies regarding the applicant's understanding of various conceptual issues and/or its ability to meet the statutory requirements. Most glaringly, the applications for the three schools were almost identical, even though the two K-8 applications include middle school grades and the K-5 does not, and none of them included the required detailed curriculum. Additionally, the historical performance of AcadeMir West does not outweigh the significant deficiencies of these applications.

Specifically, the application did not meet the required standards in 14 of the 19 applicable categories in the Model Evaluation Instrument. As summarized below, these deficiencies constitute good cause for denial of the application.

1. Failure to clearly describe the anticipated population.
  - The application states that the projected student population was developed using the demographics of the proposed targeted area and also that the demographics of the School "will mirror the demographics of Miami-Dade County," yet no desired location was identified as the

- targeted area nor did the applicant provide the results of any market research to verify its projections. (Standards 2, 14, 17)
- While the application states that the school will be offering “smaller” class sizes, the projected enrollment and number of classes are based on meeting class size in accordance with state statute, the same class size as is required of every other public school. (Standard 2)
  - The application states that they will target “students interested in exploring mathematics and science as a field of educational study and potential career pathway” but the applicant offers no method for attracting such students within the targeted area, nor does it provide an educational program that actually emphasizes math and science. (Standard 2, 3, 4)
  - The projected ELL population for the school is 40 students or approximately 10% of the population for year 1 which is significantly lower than the average ELL population in Miami-Dade which is 20%. Since a desired location was not identified, there is no support for this projection. (Standard 2)
2. Failure to provide a detailed educational and curriculum plan that illustrates how students will be provided services to attain state standards and that is aligned to the mission and vision established in Section 1. (Standards 3, 4)
- The applicant provided the Sponsor with three applications, which were identical, two K-8 schools and one K-5. The education and curriculum plan is insufficient and incomplete because it lacks a detailed curriculum. This application references the K-8 configuration throughout the curriculum plan although the school does not plan to offer grades 6-8. (Standards 3, 4)
  - The daily schedule is not aligned with the school’s educational plan. Additionally, the applicant indicates that the Sponsor’s Student Progression Plan (SPP) will be implemented, yet the schedule provided does not provide the instructional minutes required by the SPP.
  - The application states that a foreign language program will be implemented, yet the schedule did not reflect instructional minutes to accommodate this subject. Additionally the curriculum section did not provide details as to what the foreign language program would entail. (Standard 3)
  - An extended day and year will be provided but the application fails to show how this will impact the instructional day. (Standards 3, 4)
  - The application repeatedly states that the Educational Program will emphasize science and mathematics but there is no curriculum plan provided to support that emphasis and there is no mention of any innovative or rigorous science or math curriculum. (Standards 3, 4)
  - Although the application states that a rigorous curriculum will be provided, there is no evidence of academic “rigor.” (Standard 4)
  - The application indicates that thematic units have been designed that integrate various subjects but there is no description or details provided nor does the applicant show how these “units” will impact the instructional program or how they are aligned with the mission and vision of the school. (Standards 3, 4)
  - The application cited materials that are appropriate for middle school students and these are grades that will not be served.
  - Despite the application’s statements that the school will focus on mathematics and science, most of the mathematics references are outdated and not aligned with the Common Core standards. In fact, it appears that the applicant is not fully aware of the state’s new expectations for mathematics. (Standard 4)
  - The Language Arts/Reading instructional framework is not consistent with state approved materials to teach reading at all levels. (Standard 4)
  - The application cites writing standards that are not current. (Standard 4)
3. Failure to provide measureable goals and objectives that set high standards for student performance. (Standard 5)
- The application lacks evidence that a range of valid and reliable assessments will be used to measure student performance. (Standard 5)
  - The application states that “innovative” assessment tools and strategies will be used, but lists only state required assessments. (Standard 5)

- Educational goals and objectives are not specific, use the wrong metrics, do not address all of the grades the schools intend to serve, and do not provide high performance standards. Although the application states that mathematics and science will be emphasized, the goals and objectives do not reflect that emphasis. (Standard 5)
4. Failure to demonstrate an understanding of state and federal requirements regarding the education of Exceptional Students (ESE) and English Language Learners (ELL). (Standards 6,7)
    - The application does not appropriately describe the level of ESE services the school will provide. Although the application states that they will serve students who require resource instruction (40-80% general education and resource), they do not describe how that will be provided. (Standard 6)
    - The staffing plan to serve Exceptional Students does not align with the level of services indicated. (Standard 6)
    - The application provides no basis for the ELL projection and in fact it is far lower than the percentage in all other Miami-Dade County Public schools. (Standard 7)
    - The application does not provide identification procedures for ELL students who enter the school for the first time. (Standard 7)
    - The application does not provide an adequate plan for post program review and monitoring requirements for students who have exited the ELL program. (Standard 7)
    - The interventions identified for ELL, ESE and student below grade level are identical and not specifically designed for each group of students. (Standard 7)
  5. Failure to provide a realistic assessment of the projected sources of revenue and expenses that ensure the financial viability of the school. (Standard 17)
    - The applicant did not clearly indicate the cost of the facility. Even though no facility has been identified, the narrative indicated that the cost of the facility would be based on \$900 per student, but at 50% enrollment the cost varies from \$919 in year one to \$657 per student in year 5.
    - Although the application states that the budget is conservative and does not include loans or grants, the applicant nevertheless included a loan of \$25,000 in the startup budget and a loan of \$100,000 in year one (at 50% enrollment) but did not provide any documentation of the source, evidence of the school's ability to secure a loan, or the terms of the loan.
    - Expenditures for utilities are underestimated based on county standards and even the corporation's existing school's current expenditures.
    - The information provided in the budget does not align with the staffing plans provided within the application.
    - The funds allocated for the technology needs of the school are insufficient.
  6. Failure to describe sound practices for student discipline and establish policies that will ensure that there is an admissions and enrollment process that is open, fair and in accordance with applicable law. (Standards 8, 13)
    - The Student and Parent Contracts do not support a positive school climate and the implementation of the school's mission and vision. Several requirements would disfranchise students and could result in students being involuntarily withdrawn from the school which is inconsistent with the Code of Student Conduct. (Standard 13)
    - The applicant states that the school will adopt the Sponsor's Code of Student Conduct but provides a Student Contract that it is not aligned and in some instances is contradictory. For example, the contract states that students may be suspended for not following school policies such as not wearing a uniform, not delivering messages to the school, not showing good sportsmanship and not taking care of books and materials. (Standards 8, 13)
    - A clear description of the enrollment process was not provided, specifically, the method that will be used to ensure that all students who apply will be provided an equal opportunity to attend and a description of the lottery process. (Standard 13)
    - Enrollment timelines provided in sections 13 and 19 are not the same. (Standards 13, 19)
    - The application does not provide what efforts the school would make to encourage student and community involvement. (Standard 13)

7. Failure to provide evidence of an organizational plan which provides a clear understanding of how the school will be governed and managed. (Standards 9, 10, 11, 12)
  - The application contains an organizational chart that includes an ESP, but the required narrative does not provide an explanation of the relationship between the two entities. Also, the application is inconsistent as to the extent of the ESP's involvement in the school's financial operations. (Standards 9, 11)
  - The applications state that the school will have a Financial Manager, which was not budgeted or included in the staffing plan. Additionally, the duties of this position are included in services offered by the ESP. (Standards 9, 11, 12)
  - The office that each governing board member holds was not included. (Standards 9, 11)
  - There is no mention of the Parent Representative, as required by law. (Standard 9)
  - There is no indication that the school will maintain a school webpage, as required by law. (Standard 9)
  - The organizational chart provided in the application and the one in the staff handbook are different. The one found in the staff handbook shows all employees, including the principal, reporting to the ESP. But in the governance and management sections, the school's Principal will report directly to the governing board and the teachers will report to the principal who will be supported and assisted by the ESP. (Standards 9, 10)
  - The staffing plan described in the management section is not aligned with the staffing plan included with the budget. (Standards 10, 12, 17)
  - The application failed to provide job descriptions or requirements for key staff or a sound plan for recruiting and retaining qualified and capable staff. (Standard 10)
  - The application does not outline the criteria or the process the board will use to select its school leader nor does it describe how the school leader would be evaluated. (Standard 10)
  - The employee benefits and compensation plan were not delineated. (Standards 12, 17)
  - The applicant did not interview or solicit any other ESP and did not provide a persuasive explanation of the reasons for contracting with the proposed ESP. (Standard 11)
  - It is not clear how the board's relationship with the ESP will further the school's mission. (Standard 11)
  - Although a sample management agreement was provided, a clear description of the services the ESP will deliver was not provided. (Standard 11)
  - No summary of the ESP's history and experience was provided nor was the background and/or experience of the ESP principals or senior management. (Standard 11)
  - The ESP experience is not complete since no list of other schools with which the ESP has contracts was provided. Also lacking is student and financial data on these schools. (Standard 11)
8. Failure to provide a realistic plan for securing an adequate facility. (Standard 14)
  - The application does not describe any location or facility. (Standard 2, 14)
  - The facility plan discusses needed renovations but the budget did not reflect renovations nor a plan proffered to facilitate the need. (Standards 14, 17)
  - The applicant does not provide an adequate back up plan if enrollment projections are not met because many of the options provided for back up facilities are not realistic and/or appropriate. (Standard 14)
  - The applicant fails to provide an alternate or temporary facility plan.

The applicant was notified of the Superintendent's intent to recommend denial to the School Board and provided a copy of the final evaluation. Pursuant to Section 1002.33(6) (c), F.S., if the School Board approves this recommendation to deny the application, the applicant may appeal to the State Board of Education no later than 30 days after receipt of the School Board's decision.

Copies of the application and evaluation, which are incorporated by reference in this Board item, will be transmitted to the School Board Members under separate cover and will be available for inspection by the



public in the Office of Board Recording Secretary, Room 924, and in the Citizen Information Center, Room 158, 1450 N.E. Second Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132.